

'America's Darkest Secret': Sex Trafficking, Child Abuse and the Biden Administration

by **Uzay Bulut**

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<https://www.gatestoneinstitute.org/19780/sex-trafficking-child-abuse-biden-administration>

- Currently, at least 85,000 children are believed to be missing.
- "Whether intentional or not, it can be argued that the US Government has become the middleman in a large scale, multi-billion-dollar, child trafficking operation run by bad actors seeking to profit off the lives of children.... Realizing that we were not offering children the American dream, but instead putting them into modern-day slavery with wicked overlords was a terrible revelation.... They threatened me with an investigation. They... took my badge. It is a terrible thing when you blow the whistle to try to save children and you're retaliated against for trying to help. The HHS [The United States Department of Health and Human Services] did everything they could to keep all of this silent." — Tara Lee Rodas, testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement, April 26, 2023.
- "Over the last two years, this country has become an international hub for child trafficking. And the US government is behind it. Under Biden, hundreds of thousands of children have come into this country illegally. Once they get here, most are sold for sex, used for cheap labor, or forced to join gangs." — Rachel Campos-Duffy, Fox News, April 26, 2023.
- "In April 2021, when Texas Gov. Greg Abbott learned of allegations of abuse of unaccompanied minors in a federal facility in San Antonio, he

said, 'The Biden administration is presiding over the abuse of children.' He

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administration has only expanded them without communicating with state or local authorities. Local communities are not told how long the minors will be there, or where they will go when released and with no concern of the impact to local citizens. I am requesting that Congress launch a full investigation into the federal agencies responsible for approving the contracts for these facilities." — Sheena Rodriguez, president of the Alliance for a Safe Texas, testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement, April 26, 2023.

- "The mass migration crisis instigated by the Biden administration's misguided immigration policies has caused incalculable harm.... These migrants were enticed by these policies to... cross the border illegally, led by criminal smuggling and trafficking organizations, and enabled by government agencies and contractors.... The Biden administration has implemented policies that incentivize the illegal entry of unaccompanied alien children on a massive scale, to the profit of criminal smugglers and traffickers, even with full knowledge of the risks that such policies will endanger the safety and well-being of the migrant children. Some supporters of these policies have defended them on the belief that they are aiding the reunification of families, providing a safe haven from difficult living environments in their home countries, and even benefiting US employers. On the contrary, I submit that there is no possible rationalization for policies that have facilitated the abuse and exploitation of child migrants on such a large scale for so many years. There is no possible humanitarian or economic motive that could justify or make up for the damage that has been done to the victims by the smugglers, traffickers, abusive sponsors, and even family members who participated in these dreadful arrangements." — Jessica M. Vaughan, director of Policy Studies at the Center for Immigration Studies, testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement, April 26, 2023.

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- Florida Governor Ron DeSantis described what is happening as "effectively the largest human smuggling operation in American history."
 - "This is criminal... The FBI needs to be involved. They need to go find every single one of these kids — 85,000 or more — who are lost. The FBI needs to find them. We need to have an investigation by the FBI into the Homeland Security Department, into HHS to figure out who is facilitating these smuggling rings, are they deliberately not doing their job, are they deliberately or negligently turning these kids over to smugglers? We need to find out. The FBI needs to get on it and launch a full-scale investigation right now." — Senator Josh Hawley (R- MO), Fox News, April 26, 2023.
 - "To solve the problem, Congress must change the immigration laws and rein in the executive policies that are incentivizing the mass illegal migration of both adults and minors." What is needed is "more opportunity for state and local governments to investigate and penalize human trafficking and the illegal migration, human smuggling, identity fraud, and illegal employment." — Jessica M. Vaughan, testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement, April 26, 2023.
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The criminal practice of trafficking and abusing hundreds of thousands of migrant children who cross the southern border is now, thanks to the open-border policy of the Biden Administration, apparently "normal" inside the US. Pictured: A Texas National Guardswoman speaks to three unaccompanied children who arrived on the banks of the Rio Grande after crossing the US-Mexico border in Roma, Texas on July 9, 2021. (Photo by Paul Ratje/AFP via Getty Images)

The criminal practice of trafficking and abusing hundreds of thousands of migrant children who cross the southern border is now, thanks to the **open-border policy** of the Biden Administration, apparently "normal" inside the US:

"According to Customs and Border Protection, since January 2021 when Biden took the oath of office, there have been 5,118,661 **encounters** with illegal immigrants along the southern border."

These numbers do not include reports that "*at least* 1.2 million illegal immigrants," or "gotaways," who "were **confirmed** to have unlawfully crossed the U.S.-Mexico border."

"The actual number of illegal immigrants... [is] unknown. It could be double the number of known gotaways, it could be three times worse, or more. We just don't know..."

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Currently, at least 85,000 children are believed to be missing.

According to Customs and Border Protection statistics,

"[T]he number of UACs [Unaccompanied Alien Children] who arrive at the border has swelled from 33,239 in fiscal year 2020 to more than 146,000 in fiscal year 2021 and 152,000 in fiscal year 2022. So far in fiscal year 2023, there have been more than 70,000 encounters of unaccompanied children."

Many of those children are **raped**, used for **forced labor**, and forced to undertake **brutal jobs** ostensibly to "work off" their debt by the criminal cartels who reportedly now **control** the Mexican side of the border and brought the children in.

According to Tara Lee Rodas, a Health and Human Services whistleblower, in testimony before the House Judiciary Subcommittee on Immigration Integrity, Security, and Enforcement on April 26:

"Whether intentional or not, it can be argued that the US Government has become the middleman in a large scale, multi-billion-dollar, child trafficking operation run by bad actors seeking to profit off the lives of children."

She **described** the practice as "modern-day slavery".

"Today, children will work overnight shifts at slaughterhouses, factories, restaurants to pay their debts to smugglers and traffickers. Today, children will be sold for sex. Today, children will call a hotline to report they are being abused, neglected, and trafficked....."

"I must confess; I knew nothing about their suffering until 2021 when I volunteered to help the Biden Administration with the crisis at the Southern Border. As part of Operation Artemis, I was deployed to the Pomona Fairplex Emergency Intake Site in California to help the HHS [Department of Health and Human Services] Office of Refugee Resettlement reunite children with sponsors in the US.

"I thought I was going to help place children in loving homes. Instead, I discovered that children are being trafficked through a sophisticated network that begins with being recruited in home country, smuggled to the US border,

This website and ends when ORR [Office of Refugee Resettlement] delivers a child to a sponsor. Some sponsors are criminals and traffickers and members of

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Transnational Criminal Organizations. Some sponsors view children as commodities and assets to be used for earning income - this is why we are witnessing an explosion of labor trafficking.

"... I want to see the children protected, so I want to tell you some what I witnessed at the Pomona Fairplex:

- I saw vulnerable indigenous children from Guatemala who speak Mayan dialects and can't speak Spanish. That means they can't ask for help in English and they can't ask for help in Spanish. These children become captive to their Sponsors.
- I've sat with Case Managers as they cried retelling horrific things that were done to children on the journey.
- I saw apartment buildings where 20, 30 & 40 unaccompanied children have been released.
- I saw sponsors trying to simultaneously sponsor children from multiple ORR sites.
- I saw sponsors using multiple addresses to obtain sponsorships of children.
- I saw numerous cases of children in debt bondage and the child knew they had to stay with the sponsor until the debt was paid.

"Realizing that we were not offering children the American dream, but instead putting them into modern-day slavery with wicked overlords was a terrible revelation."

Rodas added that after she went public, her bosses retaliated against her.

"They threatened me with an investigation. They walked me off the emergency intake site in Texas and took my badge. It is a terrible thing when you blow the whistle to try to save children and you're retaliated against for trying to help. The HHS [The United States Department of Health and Human Services] did everything they could to keep all of this silent."

In another testimony, Jessica M. Vaughan, an expert on immigration, said:

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"Numerous investigative journalism reports published over the years in the Washington Times, Reuters, and the New York Times, Project Veritas, and others, that provide graphic details of the experiences of UACs during and after their illegal crossing and placement with sponsors in the United States, including domestic servitude, sexual abuse, forced labor, labor exploitation, and illegal employment in manufacturing, landscaping, and other inappropriate and dangerous jobs."

Rachel Campos-Duffy **reported** on April 26 on the crimes committed against migrant children:

"Over the last two years, this country has become an international hub for child trafficking. And the US government is behind it. Under Biden, hundreds of thousands of children have come into this country illegally. Once they get here, most are sold for sex, used for cheap labor, or forced to join gangs. Nobody deserves this. Especially not children."

Campos-Duffy **called** the mass trafficking, abuse, and exploitation of migrant children "America's darkest secret."

Sheena Rodriguez, president of the Alliance for a Safe Texas, **presented eyewitness testimony** regarding what is happening to children at the southern border:

"In April 2021, when Texas Gov. Greg Abbott learned of allegations of abuse of unaccompanied minors in a federal facility in San Antonio, he said, 'The Biden administration is presiding over the abuse of children.' He also called on the administration to shut these facilities down. Instead, the administration has only expanded them without communicating with state or local authorities. Local communities are not told how long the minors will be there, or where they will go when released and with no concern of the impact to local citizens. I am requesting that Congress launch a full investigation into the federal agencies responsible for approving the contracts for these facilities."

Among the several examples Rodriguez gave:

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"I have also been a witness to several incidents where children were intentionally put in harm's way by adults who forced the children into the deadly currents of the Rio Grande instead of walking through a legal port of entry feet above from their crossing point in the river...

"I also met teenage boys between the ages of 14 to 17, who claimed cartel operatives often transported children through Mexico and held them at bodegas or warehouses where armed cartel members stood guard. Many were told they were going to stay with sponsors in America, with several claims that the teens had never met or personally communicated with their supposed sponsors.

"Since January 2021, there have been over 356,000 UACs...encountered at the southern border, a majority of which have been released into the U.S.: more than 10,000 of which have been released in my respective area of north Texas.

"The Biden administration has admitted they do not keep track of their whereabouts when they are released into the U.S. With the use of taxpayer dollars, tens of thousands of children are simply missing."

Jessica M. Vaughan also offered [detailed testimony](#),

"The mass migration crisis instigated by the Biden administration's misguided immigration policies has caused incalculable harm to American communities, to the integrity of our immigration system, and, tragically, to many of the migrants themselves. These migrants were enticed by these policies to put themselves in risky situations to cross the border illegally, led by criminal smuggling and trafficking organizations, and enabled by government agencies and contractors that have looked the other way at the abuse and exploitation that frequently occurs en route and after resettlement. The most vulnerable group that has been endangered by the Biden policies are the more than 300,000 minors who have arrived on his watch (out of 660,000 total since 2012). They have been carelessly funneled through the custody of U.S.

[government agencies and contractors, and handed off to very lightly vetted](#)

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sponsors (who are usually also here illegally) in our communities without regard to their safety and well-being...

"Several major investigative reports conducted by branches of the U.S. government and news media outlets have documented how U.S. policies and practices have facilitated not only this mass migration episode, but also the resulting exploitation and abuse of the participants, which has been present since the onset of this episode. These studies and reports have exposed numerous incidents of abuse, fraud, and trafficking for the purposes of commercial sex and forced labor.

"The Florida Grand Jury observed:

"Some 'children' are not children at all, but full-grown predatory adults; some are already gang members or criminal actors; others are coerced into prostitution or sexual slavery; some are recycled to be used as human visas by criminal organizations' some are consigned to relatives who funnel them into sweatshops to pay off the debt accumulated by their trek to this country; some flee their sponsors and return to their country of origin; some are abandoned by their so-called families and become wards of the dependency system, the criminal justice system, or disappear altogether."

Vaughan gave examples of how children are exploited by gang members for sex and other criminal purposes, such as:

"In the Virginia MS-13 sex trafficking case, after running away from a group home in Fairfax, Va, the teen victims were horribly beaten to initiate them into the gang, and then repeatedly forced to engage in prostitution both to members of the gang and outsiders. From one court document:

'MINOR 2 was sex trafficked by numerous MS-13 gang members and associates shortly after she and MINOR 3 ran away from Shelter Care on August 27, 2018. According to MINOR 2, MINOR 3 informed her that she would engage in sex in exchange for money, food, and other things that MINOR 2 needed'.

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of criminal smugglers and traffickers, even with full knowledge of the risks that such policies will endanger the safety and well-being of the migrant children. Some supporters of these policies have defended them on the belief that they are aiding the reunification of families, providing a safe haven from difficult living environments in their home countries, and even benefiting US employers. On the contrary, I submit that there is no possible rationalization for policies that have facilitated the abuse and exploitation of child migrants on such a large scale for so many years. There is no possible humanitarian or economic motive that could justify or make up for the damage that has been done to the victims by the smugglers, traffickers, abusive sponsors, and even family members who participated in these dreadful arrangements."

Florida Governor Ron DeSantis **describes** what is happening as "effectively the largest human smuggling operation in American history."

Senator **Josh Hawley** referred to the Biden policy "the biggest child smuggling ring and the biggest child labor ring in American history." He told Fox News not only that the FBI needs to be involved in finding the 85,000 migrant children that the federal government has lost track of, but that the FBI should investigate the Department of Homeland Security and the Department of Health and Human Services (HSS) over their handling of migrant children.

"This is criminal... The FBI needs to be involved. They need to go find every single one of these kids — 85,000 or more — who are lost. The FBI needs to find them. We need to have an investigation by the FBI into the Homeland Security Department, into HHS to figure out who is facilitating these smuggling rings, are they deliberately not doing their job, are they deliberately or negligently turning these kids over to smugglers? We need to find out. The FBI needs to get on it and launch a full-scale investigation right now."

"There is no question," Vaughan **said**, "that that the system for processing minors who cross illegally is dysfunctional, and has been for some time, and needs to be fixed.

"To solve the problem, Congress must change the immigration laws and rein

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local governments to investigate and penalize human trafficking and the illegal migration, human smuggling, identity fraud, and illegal employment."

Uzay Bulut, a Turkish journalist, a research fellow for the Philos Project, and a Distinguished Senior Fellow at Gatestone Institute.

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